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MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

OCTOBER 1992

92-3

PLEASE RETURN

Special Election Year Feature

MEET THE CANDIDATES GUBERNATORIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES RESPOND TO DISABILITY ISSUES

(Editor's note: In September, Montana Independent Living Project, with the assistance of other groups that have an interest in disability issues, developed questions related to disability issues on both the federal and state levels. Those questions related to state issues were sent to gubernatorial candidates--Dorothy Bradley, Democrat and Mark Racicot, Republican. A separate list of questions related to federal issues were sent to the candidates for the House of Representatives--Rep. Ron Marlenee, Republican and Rep. Pat Williams, Democrat.

All four candidates responded. We hope that their responses, printed exactly as we received them and arranged alphabetically below, will help you decide who best represents your interests. Vote for the candidate of your choice November 3!

GUBERNATORIAL RACE

1. How would you support funding efforts to improve statewide delivery of independent living services to rural areas?

BRADLEY: I know that the Montana Association for Rehabilitation supports appropriations to equally fund all four independent living centers. However, sufficient funding is not in the SRS budget

We must improve these crucial services. When elected, as I revise the executive budget, I am committed to taking a hard look at bringing parity to the centers.

RACICOT: I would support continued funding. I am opposed to dedicating a sales tax to new programs. I think we must work together to ensure that current funds are being used for the most cost effective, least restrictive setting possible.

2. What steps would you take to ensure that state agencies are accessible under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act?

BRADLEY: Proper implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires firm leadership. It is essential that one agency or organization take charge of implementing the Act's provisions, including transition developments. As governor, I will recommend that Voc Rehab/Visual Services Division at SRS continue to be that agency.

As governor, I will ensure application of ADA, recognizing its common sense principles: ADA stipulates that compliance may not be required when necessary actions pose an undue hardship. Recognizing these common sense principles, I will vigorously support provisions prohibiting discrimination in employment and those requiring accessibility to public entities and accommodations; I will continue to support Montana's telecommunications and deaf relay program; finally, I will encourage negotiation and/or alternative dispute resolution before we turn to litigation.

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RACICOT: I fully support implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I believe that we must take a "common sense" and reasonable approach to implementations. Such an approach would use the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as the lead agency in training other agencies, with each agency developing their own plan.

3. How would you try to reduce the waiting lists for people who want to receive services from the rehabilitation system, Independent Living Centers, and related programs?

BRADLEY: Proven programs in place do not have the money to serve all those in need. Perhaps the most significant problem is that for want of state general fund dollars, Voc Rehab does not access all the federal funding to which it is entitled. For too long, we have suffered the consequences of replacing general fund dollars from the Industrial Accident Rehabilitation Account (IARA). The number of referrals from the workers' compensation division to Voc Rehab has decreased steadily and rapidly each of the last ten years. In 1991, as chair of the Human Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, I fought hard to keep IARA dollars coming over to Voc Rehab, but referrals are virtually nonexistent now. Adequate funding may only be assured by using resources from the general fund to service these programs. If the people want these services--and we do--financial support is a general fund responsibility.

RACICOT: I believe if we change the tax structure in Montana, we will significantly improve Montana's economic climate. An improved economy will not only give us new revenues to expand human services, but will also give us new job placements for currently unemployed and/or handicapped persons.

4. Would you support efforts to ensure continuity of health insurance coverage to working Montanans with disabilities without exemptions for pre-existing conditions?

BRADLEY: This is an excellent question which points to the root of our health care problems--a costly, confusing, inadequate system of health insurance. I believe that all Montanans should get quality, affordable health care when they need it. I can make the tough decisions about the changes necessary to attain this goal. I have not endorsed any plans to ensure coverage without exemptions for pre-existing conditions. Many serious questions about the expense and workability of such coverage must be answered before I may ensure my informed support. Simple insurance reform would ensure that nobody would be turned away by insurers, but would not necessarily make insurance affordable. Insurance networks and a state-run single payer system are options which should be considered seriously to guarantee coverage for everyone.

RACICOT: I am supporting small business insurance reform. Key issues in insurance are portability and eliminating exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

5. Do you support maintenance of Medicaid Optional Services that are currently being provided to people with disabilities? Which Medicaid options do you particularly favor?

BRADLEY: The 1993 Legislature will be under tremendous pressure to reduce or eliminate Optional Services. My opponent claims that \$40 million can be

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FOCUS is a newsletter for people interested in the development, improvement and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. It is published four times a year by Montana Independent Living Project.

Staff: Zana Smith, Executive Director Raelen Williard, Editor

Board of Directors: John Shea, President; Cecelia Cowie, Vice President; Sandy Armstead, Secretary/Treasurer; John Camper; Kathy Collins; Pat Domme; V. Lee Harrison; Dorinda Orrell; & Jon Williamson.

Inquiries, comments and changes of addresses should be addressed to: **FOCUS**, Montana Independent Living Project, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; (Voice or TDD) 406-442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

INDEPENDENT LIVING IN MONTANA

Independent living services in Montana are provided through four independent living centers: The Montana Independent Living Project in Helena (MILP), Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) in Billings, North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS) in Great Falls, and Summit Independent Living Center in Missoula. Montana's independent living centers (ILCs) provide statewide services, and are part of a larger network of approximately 300 ILCs.

The four ILCs in Montana are private, non-profit organizations operated by and for people with disabilities. All maintain a majority of persons with disabilities on their board of directors and actively recruit and hire people with disabilities for staff positions. All of the centers share a common goal of empowering people with disabilities through the provision of supportive services and involvement in systems advocacy training, advocacy, and peer counseling services. The centers do not provide residential services, but rather assist persons with disabilities in securing and maintaining independent living options of their choice. Independent living philosophy stresses a self-help approach to service delivery with a strong emphasis on peer role modeling and support. Services are not limited to a single disability group, but are offered to persons with a wide range of disabling conditions. Over 500 Montanans with disabilities receive independent living services each year.

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Montana's ILCs are experiencing ever increasing demands for services. This includes not only informing people with disabilities about their rights under ADA, but also includes a wide range of information and technical assistance services to government agencies, employers, and private businesses. ADA holds bright promise for Americans with disabilities; however, its benefits will only be fully realized if disability organizations such as independent living centers play a major role in the implementation of this new law.

Montana Independent Living Project serves fourteen counties in southwestern Montana: Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Granite, Jefferson, Lewis Clark, Madison, Meagher, Park, Powell, Silver Bow, Sweet Grass, and Wheatland. MILP's services include: case management, independence skill train-

ing, peer counseling, advocacy, independent living seminars, information and referral, and ADA information and accessibility survey services.

For more information about the independent living program in Montana, call:

MILP in Helena at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457; LIFTT in Billings at 259-5181 or 800-669-6319; NCILS in Great Falls at 452-9834 or 800-823-6245; or Summit in Missoula at 728-1630 or 800-398-9002.

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

NOVEMBER 6, 1992

Helena chapter of Montana Association for Rehabilitation (MAR) meets at 11:30 at Frisco's in Helena.

NOVEMBER 9, 10, 1992

Annual meeting of Independent Living Centers, ILC directors, executive boards, and state leaders. Fairmont Hot Springs near Butte. For more information call any Independent Living Center.

NOVEMBER 30, 1992

Montana Independent Living Project Robert Wood Johnson Grant Advisory Council Meeting at the Colonial Inn in Helena. For more information, call MILP at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

DECEMBER 8, 1992

Montana Independent Living Project Christmas open house 1:30-4:00. Everyone welcome! For information, call MILP at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

JANUARY 4, 1993

Opening day of the 53rd session of the Montana Legislature. For more information, contact the Montana Legislative Council at 444-3064. Toll free statewide phone numbers for legislative information will be published in our January newsletter.

cut without hurting anyone. I know that this is not true.

I have always firmly supported the maintenance of Medicaid options. Such services save us substantial time and dollars drained away by primary care services which could have been avoided. I favor Medicaid Optional Services that, first of all, reduce costs for primary care and secondly enable people to live independently in their own communities. Such services include prescription drugs, dental care, as well as various types of therapy (physical, speech, occupational, etc.).

Currently, Montana provides most optional services, and I intend to ensure continuation of these services. However, I need you to join me in explaining and defending the high value of optional services. I urge you to work with the Montana Association for Rehabilitation to help me save these programs.

RACICOT: Medicaid is a complex program. Thus it is difficult to capsuleize changes in so short a response. In general, I support prevention services that allow people to remain in their homes or the least restrictive environment possible.

6. Are you in favor of public funding for personal care attendant services?

BRADLEY: Personal care attendant services are indisputably a less costly alternative to institutionalization. I am deeply concerned with those who are in need but are ineligible for Medicaid coverage. The solutions I will propose as governor are first, expanding state discretion to provide such services through federal waivers, and second, broadening Medicaid eligibility to persons with disabilities, as we have with other groups of Montanans in need. These solutions must be carefully considered in light of the state's current financial pressures. Again, without your help, the necessary changes will never take place.

RACICOT: Yes, I support the personal care attendant program. I also support continued innovation to allow more control over the services they use.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RACE

1. How would you work to encourage full implementation and enforcement of the Americans With Disabilities Act?

MARLENEE: All too often, the federal government imposes mandates upon local communities without providing the guidance or the funds necessary to ensure that the spirit of the law is upheld. "Big city" solutions don't often fit "small town" problems, and this is specifically what leads to so many uncertainties and questions when it comes to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Federal mandates that require one solution for all communities is long on theory, short on practice.

A major concern of mine, one that I have voiced from the beginning has been the vagueness in this Act. Unclear and obscure legal terms will inevitably lead to confusion, misinterpretation, and finally, intervention by the courts.

In short, the federal government needs to ensure that local governments have the level of clear guidance to know what is required of them, the flexibility to implement policies to fit their specific needs, and the federal dollars to accomplish this.

WILLIAMS: The recent enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act has been widely heralded as the most significant advancement in the civil rights of individuals with disabilities in the last 20 years, and I am pleased to have been an original cosponsor of the bill. I have been working on the enactment of this law for several years, and am now committed to assisting the public in understanding and complying with this law. Here in Congress, I am working to make current laws affecting persons with disabilities more responsive to consumer needs, including the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Education of the Deaf Act. Congress has also passed several laws to help businesses comply with the ADA, including three different tax credits, one of which is specifically targeted to small businesses, and the establishment of ten regional business assistance centers. I am committed to full enforcement of the ADA, and full integration for individuals with disabilities.

2. The goal of the independent living program is to assure that persons with disabilities are able to avoid institutionalization and lead independent productive lives in the community. How do you think Congress should support this goal?

MARLENEE: It is an extremely important goal to

enable people to avoid institutionalization. Not only because of the prohibitive expense of such care, but because there is a greater sense of dignity when a person is able to live on their own, choose how they live their lives, and contribute to society. Empowering people to make a contribution to society is the best possible form of therapy.

Since these issues are traditionally handled on the state level, the proper role of the federal government is--quite simply--not to get in the way. State and local initiatives should be encouraged, and federal Medicaid payments should be made flexible enough that state governments are able to meet their own needs as they see fit. State and local communities deal with issues like this better than the federal government because they are closer to the problem and better understand the situation. Again, Washington solutions don't often fit Montana problems.

WILLIAMS: I have been an advocate of the Independent Living Program for many years, and have taken an active role here in Congress to be sure that the Federal government supports consumer accountability and responsiveness in funding Independent Living Centers. This year, I have been involved in writing the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. In the spirit of the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 make a strong commitment to advancing the cause of consumer empowerment and to facilitating and maximizing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to have control and authority over their lives. This bill creates partnerships between providers and consumers to ensure a more consumer-driven system; it bridges the critical transition from school to employment and independent community life; and it fosters greater independence and opportunity by promoting the statewide development of centers for independent living. I have authored amendments to this bill targeted at assisting rural areas in improving their services for individuals with disabilities. Similar bills reauthorizing the Rehabilitation Act passed the House and Senate this summer. I am now immersed in the process of developing a compromise bill that can be sent to the President.

3. What role should Congress take in ensuring affordable, quality health coverage is available to all Americans, including those with disabilities? What provisions should be included in a health care plan?

MARLENEE: Again, as I have said, the federal government should be looked at as an "enabler" and "empowerer" more than a "provider." We all know that access to health care in America, especially in rural areas and for people with disabilities, is a major problem. We must expand the access and availability of quality health care for our state and nation. At the same time, we need to strengthen our commitment to hospitals, clinics, and the wide range of health care providers.

To be effective, we need to craft a health care strategy that provides more access to quality health services for Montanans, less onerous regulatory and administrative burdens for our healing professionals. At the same time, such a policy should also be cost effective and desirable for business.

For example, we should provide tax incentives to small employers to provide health care insurance to their employees, and a full tax deduction for the self-employed. We should also attack the cost of health care, providing malpractice tort reform as well as reducing the amount of onerous and burdensome paperwork and red tape facing our doctors. This will allow them to spend more of their valuable time and budgets helping the sick rather than creating a blizzard of paperwork.

WILLIAMS: While there are several health care reform proposals being discussed, thus far I have not endorsed any one plan. While many plans have been offered as solutions to the health care crisis, not one has all the answers. The plan that is established for the country should include universal access, affordable costs, assured flexibility in choice of doctors, quality care, and efficiency within the system.

I chair the Labor-Management Relations subcommittee, one of three committees that have jurisdiction over health care. As Chairman, I believe it is critical that we find a workable solution to the problem. To that end, I have held nine Congressional forums and hearings in Montana in the past year along with countless meetings on the issue. I will continue to involve Montanans in the health care discussion because I believe that we have an important part in developing health care for America.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS — ADA RESPONSIBILITIES —

State and local governments are responsible for complying with the Title II regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These regulations were effective on January 26, 1992. If agencies have to make structural changes in facilities to comply with the Title II ADA obligations, such changes should be made within three years of the effective date or as soon as possible.

Public agencies that employ 50 or more persons should have developed a transition plan by July 26, 1992. During that time the agency should involve people with disabilities or organizations representing people with disabilities in the planning process. The transition plan should, at a minimum: 1) Identify physical obstacles that limit accessibility of programs or activities; 2) Describe in detail the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible; 3) Specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance with this section; and 4) Indicate the official responsible for implementation of the plan.

ADA Title II regulations require that public entities complete a self evaluation plan by January 26, 1993, one year from the effective date of the regulations. Note that public entities are required to comply with the requirements whether or not they have completed the self evaluation plan.

The self evaluation is a public entity's assessment of its current policies and practices. The self evaluation identifies and corrects those policies and practices that are inconsistent with the ADA requirements. As part of the self evaluation, a public entity should: 1) Identify all of the public entity's programs, activities, and services; and 2) Review all the policies and practices that govern the administration of the public entity's programs, activities, and services.

Areas that need careful examination include: 1) Physical barriers to program accessibility; 2) Careful examination of policies and practices to determine whether any exclude or limit the participation of individuals with disabilities and identification of policy modifications to be implemented; and 3) Equally effective communication with people with visual and hearing impairments.

For more information, consult: 1) the ADA Title II Regulations; 2) the ADA Title II Technical Assistance Manual; 3) Bob Maffit, State ADA Liaison, at Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, at 444-2590; 4) the ADA Region VIII Technical Assistance Center in Colorado Springs, CO at 800-949-4232; or 5) Montana Independent Living Project.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

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4. Do you favor deregulation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

MARLENEE: Generally speaking, I support deregulation in almost every form. Regulations, especially federal regulation, often create a blizzard of paperwork, expand the payroll of regulatory agencies, and help no one. In fact, they often hurt the people they purport to help.

For example, doctors from all over Montana write to me complaining of unreasonable and onerous administrative burdens that require them to hire more people, and spend more time--not helping the sick--but filling out forms. Enough is enough.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is very important legislation designed to help states provide all children with disabilities access to free education that is appropriate for their special needs. Because of the specific nature of such needs, and because the number of qualifying children, their needs, and the facilities of each community differ, I support deregulation to the extent that it will provide greater flexibility for local communities. In this way, I hope that we can meet the important needs of these very special kids.

WILLIAMS: I am strongly against the deregulation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). I do support efforts to minimize the regulatory burden that some school districts face in complying with this act regarding paperwork, but I would never support anything that weakens this important legislation. In considering the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act next year, Congress will be looking at ways to improve our education system, while safeguarding the commitment to serving our youngsters with disabilities. As a member of the Elementary and Secondary Education subcommittee, I will be sure that Congress continues to ensure that federal money from IDEA is spent on students with disabilities and not used for other purposes.

CAN YOU HELP US HELP OTHERS?

Montana Independent Living Project (MILP) is establishing a Consumer Accessibility Fund to raise money for home accessibility support for our consumers who are unable to acquire such support through their own resources. The Fund will be available to people with disabilities within our region to do projects such as building ramps, modifying bathrooms and kitchens, and mounting handrails.

Listed below are several ways you can help. Maybe you can think of others.

- 1) Collect cans for recycling. Ask your friends to save their cans for you and take them to a recycling center that pays. Donate the money to MILP's Consumer Accessibility fund.
- 2) Ask someone to donate \$10.00 a month for a year to MILP. Ask six people to donate \$5.00 a month for a year.
- 3) Many churches have small pools of money available to groups. These pools are often in the \$50 to \$500.00 range. Research your church's policies for using these funds, and then ask them if they can provide assistance to people with disabilities or contribute to the MILP Consumer Assistance Fund. Some churches have specific criteria related to where and how their funds will be used. That's okay because we have people who have access problems throughout our region.
- 4) A strategy with long-deferred payoff (we hope!)... Leave the MILP Accessibility Fund a bequest. Ask your friends to do the same.

For more information on how you can help, call us at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

ACCESSIBILITY SURVEYS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that requires all government programs and businesses that serve the public be accessible to everyone, regardless of disability. Your physical location is a major component of that accessibility.

The first step to ensuring accessibility is to identify barriers that might keep people from being able to get into your building.

The Montana Independent Living Project (MILP)

can help identify those barriers by conducting an ADA accessibility survey. Using the most up-to-date and comprehensive checklists, MILP assesses your building in 14 different areas including: doors, stairs, ramps, elevators, pathways, restrooms, parking, fountains, and telephones

MILP also provides you with a written report to use when planning needed modifications. Modifications for accessibility can be simple: lower a mirror, move a plant out of a pathway, and put up signs directing persons with disabilities to an accessible door

It could also mean building a ramp with an acceptable slope for persons with mobility problems of all types. The decisions are yours.

Understanding the spirit of the ADA--access for all--is not difficult. Complying with the ADA standards is a little bit harder but what it takes is time. Time to read and understand the regulations. Time to assess your building. Time to research questions. Time you don't have! MILP can do that for you.

To find out more about the ADA, your responsibilities as a government entity or as a business, or to arrange to have your facilities surveyed, contact the MILP ADA Survey Coordinator, Jeanne Schutt at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

CLOSING THE GAP

Closing the Gap is a private business whose goal is to provide information on the use of computers for people with disabilities. To accomplish that goal, they produce a large, interesting bi-monthly publication also titled Closing the Gap. It is available for \$26.00 per year. Their fall issue is 62 pages packed full of information on publications, computer techniques, software, and products. Specific articles cover adult aphasia and voice output communication aids, technology for tots, and the electronic support group for people with disabilities on GENIE (General Electric Network for Information Exchange). Closing the Gap also holds an annual conference in October in Minneapolis.

For more information, contact Closing the Gap, PO Box 68, Henderson, MN, 56044, 612-248-3294 or Fax 612-248-3810.

FOR SALE

1978 Dodge van with 42,129 actual miles, has electric lift, raised top with storage, air conditioning, couch/bed, extra wheels, and 2-way radio. Hand controls available but not installed. Asking \$7,000. Call Maxine in Broadus at 436-2927 or 775-6467.

1977 Dodge handicapped accessible van with 34,000 miles. Has hand controls, electric lift, air conditioning, and stereo. Asking \$6,800. For information, call Don or Catherine in Butte at 494-1452.

WANTED TO BUY

Want to buy an electric tricycle for mobility at a reasonable cost. Prefer 2 seats. Call Herb, day or evening, at 357-3702 in Chinook.

Braille, Cassette Tape, or Large Print versions of FOCUS are available. Call Raelen at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

DISABLED BUT ABLE TO VOTE

Mike Cooney, Secretary of State wrote an article, "Accessibility at the Polling Place" for the August issue of FOCUS emphasizing Montana state policy that no one should be denied the right to vote because of a disability. Montana law requires that polling places be listed in the newspaper before each election, including a notice of the accessibility rating for each precinct.

If you require accessibility and are assigned to an inaccessible polling place, you have several options: 1) request an absentee ballot; 2) notify the county election administrator in writing that you would like to be assigned to a nearby accessible polling place; or 3) arrange for "curbside voting" where two appointed election judges take a ballot to a voter who has come to the voting location, but cannot enter the building.

For details or deadlines on any of these options, request a copy of the article, "Accessibility at the Polling Place," from MILP at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457; call your county election administrator; or contact Mike Cooney, Secretary of State, State Capitol, Helena, Montana 59620, 444-4732 (voice or TDD).



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MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

AUGUST 1992

ACCESSIBILITY AT THE POLLING PLACE

By MIKE COONEY, Secretary of State

Editor's Note: After the primary election, MILP received several calls inquiring about the laws that apply to the accessibility of polling places. I called the Secretary of State's office and was told that they are making strides to ascertain that people with disabilities are able to enjoy their right to vote! Mike Cooney, the Secretary of State, volunteered to write this article so that, prior to the November elections, people with disabilities would know how to register and make arrangements to vote

If you have questions on this or any election matter, feel free to contact your county election administrator, the Secretary of State's Office in Helena at 444-4732 (Voice or TDD), or your local Independent Living Center. Thanks for your efforts, Mike! R.W.

The right to vote is an essential part of our democratic society. Every two years Montanans have the opportunity to choose who will represent them at the federal, state, and local levels. Through the initiative process, you as voters can also directly affect state law (as you did on June 2nd, by approving Legislative Referendum 110 and rejecting Legislative Referendum 109).

How we vote, or even if we choose to vote, is a personal matter that each of us must decide for ourselves. However, no person should be denied the right to vote because of obstacles that prevent or discourage their participation in the election process. On this matter, the State of Montana has taken a strong progressive stand to ensure that all citizens be able to cast their ballots.

Before any polling place can be used, the county election administrator must make an on-site survey of the location to determine its accessibility. They will test the polling place by following the actual route an elector would take when going to vote and determining if it meets the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards criteria and the Administrative Rules written by the Secretary of State.

Whenever possible, the polling places chosen must be accessible or made accessible by election day. The law requires that the list of the county polling places be pub-

EAGLE WATCH ESTATES PROVIDES ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

In June, Montana Mobility Impaired Housing, Inc. opened Eagle Watch Estates at a beautiful river front location along the Clark Fork River in Missoula. Eagle Watch Estates is a twenty-four unit apartment building and provides accessible housing and access to twenty-four hour care. The building provides subsidized housing at 30% of income for qualifying low income persons.

Eagle Watch Estates residents can receive personal attendant care services, assistance with cooking and cleaning, independent living skill training, and participate in a resident's council. ASI's emphasis on resident participation makes it essential that applicants be competent at directing their personal cares and social activities. Community resources are available for transportation, education, job training, as well as social and recreational activities.

Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI) is the sponsor and property manager of Eagle Watch Estates. ASI is a tax-exempt Minnesota nonprofit corporation. ASI provides independent and semi-independent living opportunities

Continued on Page 3

lished in the newspaper before each election. Included in this notice must be the accessibility rating for each precinct.

If a voter who is elderly or disabled is assigned to an inaccessible polling place, they have several alternatives.

Voting by absentee ballot - If a person is physically unable to go to the polls, they may, by written request to their county election administrator, ask that they be sent an absentee ballot. For this year's November 3rd election, a voter may request an absentee ballot beginning August 20. Applications may be made up until noon of November 2nd, but remember to leave time for mail delivery, if you are unable to go to the courthouse.

(Continued on Page 2)

PLEASE RETURN

POLLING PLACE

(Continued on Page 2)

Assignment to a different polling place - A voter may notify the county election administrator in writing, at least seven days before the election, that they would like to be assigned to a nearby accessible polling place. Even though they may go to a different Precinct to vote, they will still be voting their own precinct's ballot.

"Curbside voting" - A last alternative is "curbside voting" where two appointed election judges take a ballot to a voter who has come to the voting location, but cannot enter the building. The election judges by law cannot reveal how that person voted to protect each voter's right to a secret ballot. If a person chooses this method instead of absentee voting, they should contact their county election administrator before the election day to work out the necessary arrangements.

As Secretary of State, I am responsible for establishing guidelines for the counties to follow to make voting as easy as possible. The rules established by this office require that each polling place must have instructions for voting and registering displayed in large-print. In addition, each polling place must have a table no higher than three feet and with room to accommodate a wheelchair in a location that will guarantee the same secrecy as the regular polling booths.

At least one stylus or writing implement with a large, easily graspable handle must be at each location as well. The election judges must have extra seating available so that voters who need to can sit down and rest while they are waiting to vote.

To assist voters in educating themselves on the issues that they will be voting on, I also publish a Voter's Information Pamphlet (VIP) which is mailed to each household with a registered voter. For those who may have difficulty reading this text, I have made the text available in large-size print or on audio tape. Most county libraries have these tapes, and extra copies of large print VIP can be requested directly from my office by writing me, Secretary of State, Mike Cooney, State Capitol, Helena, Montana

59620 or by calling at 444-4732.

For those with hearing impairments, I have installed a Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) which you can call at 444-4732 to get election information during regular business hours.

I strongly believe that everyone should take part in the election process. I have worked and will continue to work with the legislature and county election administrators to ensure that Montana's elections are fair and open for all to participate in.

You have until October 5th this year to register to vote if you are not already registered, but I urge you to register as soon as possible. If you are not sure if you are registered, you should contact your county election administrator.

You will be electing candidates to a number of important offices at this year's election on November 3rd. You will also be deciding upon several state-wide ballot issues. Please make sure that you vote. As this year's voter slogan so aptly puts it: "One vote could make the difference - Will it be yours?"

AVIATION AWARENESS DAY AT BISON AVIATION

On Saturday August 15 from 8 am to 5 pm, Bison Aviation in Helena will hold an open house to promote aviation awareness. As a part of the Aviation Awareness Day celebration, they will have refreshments and provide airplane rides for people at the rate of \$.05 per pound. All profits will be donated to Montana Independent Living Project.

Bison now offers an air taxi service, aircraft rental, flight instruction, and ground schools. They hope to add a program to their services to teach people with disabilities to fly.

Bison Aviation has a barrier free building and are working on making the parking facilities and their services accessible to people with disabilities. If you want further information, have questions about accessibility, or if you have a disability and want to participate in the airplane rides, please contact John Patten in advance at 443-0066.

FOCUS is a newsletter for people interested in the development, improvement and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. It is published four times a year by Montana Independent Living Project.

Staff: Zana Smith, Executive Director Raelen Williard, Editor

Board of Directors: John Shea, President; Cecelia Cowie, Vice President; Sandy Armstead, Secretary/Treasurer; John Camper; Kathy Collins; Pat Domme; V. Lee Harrison; Dorinda Orrell; & Jon Williamson.

Inquiries, comments and changes of addresses should be addressed to: **FOCUS**, Montana Independent Living Project, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; (Voice or TDD) 406-442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

MILP OFFERS ADA SURVEY SERVICES

The Montana Independent Living Project (MILP) now offers an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility survey service--a service which helps building owners or occupants check their facilities to see if they are accessible to persons with disabilities. The ADA is a civil rights law guaranteeing all persons, including those with disabilities, equal access to goods and services, employment, transportation, and communications.

MILP has a group of trained surveyors, including persons with disabilities, who are available to conduct assessments for businesses and state and local government facilities. Working in teams, the surveyors go through a building or portion of a building, as requested, looking at and measuring those features covered under the ADA that might present barriers or safety hazards to people with disabilities. Building managers or business owners use the results of the survey to formulate short and long-term plans to determine how they will comply with the ADA. These plans document how the building will be changed or how services will be offered differently so that persons with disabilities will be able to have access to the same goods or services as persons without disabilities do.

Costs of the accessibility service are billed per on-site hour for a two-person survey team and bids can be provided for larger or smaller projects. The survey teams have done accessibility assessments for businesses, organizations, and state and local government offices.

For more information on how you can comply with the ADA, the timeliness for compliance, or disability-related tax provisions, contact Raelen Williard at MILP's Information Services. If you would like to know more about the accessibility survey services or want to schedule a survey, contact Jeanne Schutt, the ADA Survey Coordinator. (Telephone 800-735-6457 or in Helena at 442-5755)

EAGLE WATCH ESTATES

Continued on Page 3

in community settings for adults with mobility impairments and physical disabilities.

ASI has received a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Grant (HUD) to construct a twenty-four unit apartment building in Jamestown, ND. A grant request has also been submitted to HUD to construct accessible housing in Spokane and Great Falls.

Eagle Watch will have an open house and the dedication of their building on August 21. For information about their open house or the Eagle Watch Estates program, contact Bruce Blattner, Northwest Regional Coordinator or Kathy Dutton, Site Manager at: Eagle Watch Estates, PO Box 7095, Missoula, Montana 59807-7995, 549-3892. For information about ASI, and other housing projects, contact ASI, Stephen Vander Schaaf, 2550 University Avenue West, Suite 301 N, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114, 612-645-0541.

HELENANS RECOGNIZED FOR PROVIDING IMPROVED ACCESS FOR DISABLED

On Sunday, July 26, the second anniversary of the signing of the ADA, MILP held an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration at Bill Carson Memorial Park at the Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds. Several Helena businesses and organizations were recognized for their participation in the spirit of the ADA in making Montana and Helena accessible. Certificates were presented to Best Western Colonial Inn; Helena Dial-A-Ride; Helena Parking Commission; Keller, Reynolds, Drake, Johnson, & Gillespie, PC-Attorneys; Mane Gallery Hair Design; Dr. Jack W. McMahon, Jr. and Dr. Robert C. Whitesitt; and Montana Telecommunications for the Telephone Handicapped. Awards were presented by Cecelia Cowie of the MILP Board.

June Hermanson of Polson, chair of the Social and Rehabilitation Independent Living Advisory Council, spoke on the ADA, which guarantees the right of equal access for people with disabilities to employment, government, goods and services, and communications. Activities for the observance included refreshments and a wheelchair obstacle course provided by the EIEIO Project. EIEIO (Empowerment & Independence Through Education and Information Outreach) is a community-based rehabilitation program providing education and assistance for farmers and ranchers with disabilities. This project is based at Montana State University in Bozeman and is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service.

ADA HELP WANTED

TEMPORARY PART-TIME HELP WANTED in Helena, Butte, Dillon, and Bozeman areas. ADA ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY TEAM MEMBERS - will train. Accessibility surveys are conducted at the request of businesses or governmental entities who want to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Minimum qualifications: first-or second-hand knowledge of disabilities; commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act; willingness to work occasionally on call for at least three hours at a time between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 pm; have access to transportation to local job sites; ability to read, comprehend, and reason. Liability insurance provided by MILP. Persons accepted for training must sign non-competition agreement. Salary dependent on experience.

Accessibility survey team members will work alone or in pairs, depending on abilities. Using standardized forms, team members survey the physical aspects of buildings for accessibility (see related article on this page).

If interested, contact Jeanne Schutt, MILP's ADA Survey Coordinator, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601. Call 800-735-6457 or in Helena call 442-5755.

COMING UP NEXT...

AUGUST 22, 23, 24

The Rural Institute on Disabilities in Missoula is sponsoring Common Threads '92, a three day conference focusing on rural programs that are successfully providing disability-related service. For more information, call 243-5467 (Voice/TDD).

AUGUST 22

Coalition of Montanans Concerned with Disabilities will hold it 1st annual convention in conjunction with the Common Threads '92 Conference on August 22 from 6:30 to 9:30 pm at the Village Red Lion. For more information, call Mike Mayer at 728-1630.

AUGUST 28 & 29, 1992

Northern Rockies Brain Injury Symposium is sponsored by Community Rehabilitation Center, Missoula, Montana for the continuing education of physicians, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, recreation therapists, speech-language pathologist, social workers, and other professionals in the field of traumatic brain injury rehabilitative care. The conference topic is "Rehabilitation in a Post-Acute Setting." For information or registration forms, contact Deb Frazier, Community Rehabilitation Center, 2827 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-728-4100, ext 5488.

SEPTEMBER 14-19

MILP will sponsor the sixth annual Independent Living Seminar for persons with Traumatic Brain Injury. It will be held at Feathered Pipe Ranch, Helena, MT. For more information, contact Sandra McCormick 406-442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

SEPTEMBER 25-27

The Montana Head Injury Association, Inc. will hold its annual conference at the Holiday Inn in Billings. The conference will be regional with people from six western states attending. The Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury Center will be presenting training programs. For more information, contact Joan Brewer 406-259-1428 or Karen Rimel at 406-728-4100.

OCTOBER 7-9

The Montana Association for Rehabilitation (MAR) will hold its annual conference at the Holiday Inn in Bozeman. For more information, contact Bill Fortune at COR Enterprises in Billings at 406-248-9115.

MILP RECREATION PROGRAM

Our bowling program ended May 20, 1992 and will resume in the fall. Trophies were given for 500 and 600 series scores and pins were given to each bowler for their enthusiasm and participation. It was fun for everyone.

In the first summer outing, thirteen consumers in our recreation group enjoyed several hours of fun with an indoor picnic due to rainy weather. Food was donated by the Hofbrau, Barbecue Heaven, County Market and others. Activities included a birthday celebration, driving go-carts at Mr. D's, and miniature golf.

Other summer activities will be picnics, a boat trip, tour train ride and a visit to the Lewis & Clark County fair.

HEAD INJURY/CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY GROUP BEGINS

In August, Montana Independent Living Project will begin a Chemical Dependency Support Group for individuals who are disabled by traumatic brain injury (TBI) and diagnosed as chemically dependent or are disabled by TBI and determined at risk for chemical dependency. The goal of the program is to prevent the onset of abuse in TBI clients, as well as to stop abuse by clients already diagnosed as chemically dependent.

The group will be conducted by a certified chemical dependency counselor who will use a range of therapeutic approaches and existing community support systems. For further information, contact Sandy McCormick at MILP at 442-5755 or 800-735-6457.

JUDY BACKA'S BOOK AVAILABLE

Judy Backa has just completed and published her autobiography, "Climbing a Mountain and Living with Cerebral Palsy," and she would like to share it with you. If you want a copy, you may purchase it by sending a check or money order for \$14.00 (\$12.95 plus \$1.05 for postage) to:

Judy Backa
1538 Lewis Street
Helena, Montana 59601.

Judy would appreciate it if you could spread the word around about her book. Thanks!

OUTDOOR RECREATION IS FOR EVERYONE

Condensed from an article written by Bill Phippen, Information Officer, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Helena. For more information, contact Bill at 444-3079 (Voice) or 444-1200 (TDD).

Somewhere deep in Montana's roots lies a seed from which an uncommon compassion and respect for the rights of our fellow citizens grows. Perhaps it's the renowned quality of the environment we share--our crystalline waters, our humbling mountains, our wide-open spaces--that causes the seed to germinate. Or perhaps it is in our past--a special kinship among those who, with the help and support of neighbors, weathered recurring hard times, yet never abandoned their dreams of living under the Big Sky. Whatever the reason, from generation to generation a concern for the dignity of our neighbors is there, undeniably there.

So it shouldn't surprise anyone that we would want all Montanans to partake of the largely unmatched recreational opportunities our beautiful state has to offer. In this light, and armed with the knowledge that changing demographics and federal accessibility standards now make equal opportunity the law, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FW&P) has embarked on a major new program that addresses the needs and rights of our constituents with disabilities.

Entitled "Crossing the Barriers," the program is designed to ensure that FW&P facilities and programs comply with federal accessibility standards while satisfying the compulsion to "do what is right" for all Montanans. In response to the needs and rights of all Montanans, as well as those who visit our state, in 1989 FW&P began an in-depth study of its facilities, programs, and policies to evaluate its current ability to provide accessibility and to plan for making those modifications necessary to serve all its publics.

Then FW&P hired a consultant on disability issues to help guide department staff through the effort. Judy Harris, of Helena, who uses a wheelchair, is an expert in the areas of disability awareness training, removal of those barriers that impede all citizens from using facilities and participating in programs, rights of the disabled, and recreation management in general. Says Harris, "What persons with disabilities want most is the recognition that those with disabilities have an equal right to receive recreational services." At present, approximately 17% of Montana's population is affected by some sort of disability, she notes, and that number is expected to grow markedly as our population ages over the next couple of decades. "Almost all of us know someone with a disability and all of us will experience some loss of abilities at some point in our lives. So providing opportunities for those with disabilities really should be important to everyone."

As a member of a FW&P steering committee established to oversee department efforts related to Crossing the Barriers program, Harris has been instrumental in developing the heart of FW&P's current accessibility program and

the development of the transition plan, released in August 1991. As a part of this program, Judy Harris presents disability awareness workshops to those department employees who will implement these objectives to help them be aware of the challenges faced by people with disabilities and trained in recognizing obstacles to accessibility. These workshops encourage participants to make use of wheelchairs, don blindfolds or earplugs, and maneuver about on crutches.

Al Elser, deputy director of FW&P and a recent workshop attendee summed up the experience this way: "I was humbled by my own insensitivity to the challenges those with disabilities face. Sitting in a wheelchair, trying to negotiate ramps, graveled paths, and other obstacles, sure brought the message home to me. As an agency, we must make a strong commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have access to our facilities, information, and resources."

At all FW&P regional offices, the department's headquarters in Helena and over 40 FW&P-administered sites around the state, for example, parking areas, restrooms, and trails have seen accessibility improvements over the past two years. Of particular note have been: (1) construction of an accessible dock and observation platform at the Riverside Campground at Canyon Ferry State Park to permit people with disabilities to enjoy the bald eagle viewing on the Missouri River that has become so popular over the past few years; (2) placement of accessible fishing station and latrines at the Woodside Bridge Fishing Access Site on the Bitterroot River near Corvallis; (3) recently begun work to make all showers, rest room facilities, and the visitor center at Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park near Whitehall completely accessible.

Efforts to improve accessibility to the department's programs are underway as well. To highlight just a few: (1) FW&P's Hunter Education Program has geared up to provide classes to residents with disabilities, including youths with disabilities. (2) Beginning in 1992, big game hunting and fishing regulations, several department brochures, and other types of printed information will be available in larger type for the sight impaired. (3) Selected brochures also will be available on audio cassette and, in the future, FW&P displays will incorporate more than just the visual medium. (4) Since early 1990, a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) has been in operation at the FW&P headquarters in Helena to enable those with hearing impairments to correspond with agency personnel (406-444-1200).

Yet the real work toward improving accessibility on a department-wide basis has just begun. Many of the efforts will require relatively little time and money to accomplish, while others will require entirely new work directives, considerable funding, and approval from the Montana Legislature to complete.

Modifying existing sites and programs to remove barriers to accessibility is essential, but is only a partial solution to FW&P's overall accessibility goals. Accessibility will continue to be a determining factor in developing department policies and planning new recreation sites and programs.

FOR SALE

1978 Dodge van with 42,129 actual miles, has electric lift, raised top with storage, air conditioning, couch/bed, extra wheels, and 2-way radio. Hand controls available but not installed. Asking \$7,000. Call Maxine at 436-2927 or 775-6467.

Little Amigo 3-wheel electric battery-operated cart. New head. Charger goes with it. \$675.00. Call Dorothy Keough, 452-5631, Great Falls.

Twin Spenco mattress; 6 mo. old; helps prevent bed sores; cloth on one side & water proof on the other. Originally \$199.00--Will sell for \$100.00. Call Linda at 443-2635 after 5:00 pm.

WANTED TO BUY

Retired couple on fixed income is seeking an upholstered lift chair (recliner) at a reasonable cost. Please call Rachel or Robert, evenings at 443-5936.

Don't Forget Our

800 Number!

1-800-735-MILP (6457)

1-800-735-6457

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO WORK ON ACCESSIBILITY

The city of Helena, in conjunction with Lewis and Clark County, is in the process of forming an Advisory Board to deal with the accessibility of all City and County Buildings in Lewis and Clark County. Currently, they need three volunteers with disabilities to serve on this board to assist in planning. This is your chance to make a difference in Lewis and Clark County!

For more information or if you want to serve on the Advisory Board, contact Tim Murry at 447-8399.



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